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OFFICIALS SAY U.S. SECRETLY TRAINED JORDANIAN FORCE

COMMANDO UNIT FOR GULF

Troops Could Reportedly Be Transported by American Planes in Emergency

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 21 — The United States has been secretly training a Jordanian strike force for use in military emergencies in the Persian Gulf, Government officials said today. They said the training had been under way for the last two and a half years.

It was learned last week that the Reagan Administration was seeking \$220 million in secret financing for a Jordanian force. But it was not known then that the force had already started training with American Special Forces troops and had engaged in joint exercises with them.

The officials also said that in case of an emergency requiring the use of the Jordanian force, it would be airlifted not only by Jordan's planes but also by United States Air Force transports that would be sent to the region.

8,000 a More Accurate Figure

The officials who provided information on the plan last week said the Administration was seeking \$220 million to provide the military equipment to start the Jordanian force. Also, the first reports of the plan made no mention of any Air Force involvement.

The officials also said that, instead of the 1,500 to 3,000 Jordanian troops first reported to be involved, the more accurate figure was 8,000 — two brigades of 4,000 each.

They said the idea for the force came from the Jordanians in 1979 after the takeover of the Great Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, by religious militants and the difficulty encountered by the Saudis in dealing with the crisis. The Jordanians said that with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab

it was necessary to have a Moslem commando force that could go rapidly into pro-Western countries to put down militant uprisings or mutinies in the armed forces.

The countries that would be aided, in addition to Jordan, the officials said, include Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and Yemen.

Carter Approved Plan

The officials said that the Carter Administration gave the initial approval to the plan, but that it had been put into effect by the Reagan Administration.

Money for the training and the joint exercises with the Jordanians has come from regular Defense Department appropriations, but with no publicity. Several members of Congress noted that the money spent on the Jordanians had been listed as regular training expenditures. Even some key members of Congress complained that they had been deliberately kept in the dark about all aspects of the program.

Since reports of the plan began to be appear — the first came on the Israeli radio last week — the Administration has been briefing small groups of members of Congress.

Said to Be Valuable for U.S.

The Administration has justified the training exercises with Jordan, officials said, on the ground that it is valuable for the American forces who need to be familiar with the region in case of possible American involvement in a Middle East war. But some members of Congress who were briefed were said to have complained that the training of the Jordanians took place without specific authorization from Congress and was a way of circumventing Congress.

The Jordanian force needs specialized equipment and transport planes, and this is what the confidential requests for \$220 million are supposed to cover, the officials said.

The money would be given to the Jordanians, if approved by Congress, from a secret section of the pending Defense Appropriations Bill. The Jordanians would buy three C-130 military transports, in addition to the five they already have, as well as Tow antitank weapons, Stinger hand-held anti-aircraft missile-firing weapons, tank supported bridge-laying equipment, self-propelled anti-aircraft weapons called Divads and satellite communications equipment.

But since C-130's can carry only about 50 fully armed troops with their vehicles, in an emergency there would be a need for more aircraft than Jordan possesses. Thus, it is anticipated, the officials said, that United States Air Force planes would be pressed into service.

The Administration has said nothing publicly about the project, but privately officials have said it is crucial for American ties not only to Jordan but also to Saudi Arabia and other nations. If Congress declines to provide the money, officials said, it will be regarded in the region as the work of Israel and its supporters.

Israelis Are Concerned

The Israeli Government, which has been briefed on the project, is being urged by the Administration not to use its influence to block it. Israelis, however, have expressed concern to the Administration about the idea because of the Israeli view that in a new Middle East war, equipment given to any Arab nation, no matter what the initial reason, might be used against Israel.

Last week Jordan's armed forces issued a statement accusing Israel of trying to abort the arrangement with the United States.

"Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty, King Hussein, has always supported, and will continue to support Arab brothers, as it sees in them a steady source of support," the statement said. "By the same token, Jordan offers as much assistance as it can, in all fields, including the military one, to those brotherly Arab states in return for their aid."

A well-placed non-Jordanian Arab source expressed skepticism today about the notion that a Jordanian force would ever be used to rescue conservative Arab governments, particularly Saudi Arabia's. "Anyone who believes that the Gulf states would rely on the Jordanians to salvage their regimes," he said, "doesn't understand the Gulf."